

7 November 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director, Central Reference

SUBJECT : Intellofax Reference Questionnaire - Response to

The questionnaire submitted to analysts in the DD/I and DD/P areas met with about a 50% response, a figure considerably above the expected return in commercial surveys. A summary of the resulting answers has yielded certain inferences which will be valuable both in current operations and subsequent systems studies. Two tables are attached: (1) response to each question; (2) analysis of comments.

#### PURPOSE

The immediate objectives for which the survey was made were accomplished:

1. To determine the extent to which Agency users and potential users were acquainted with the revised Intellofax System and its selective retrieval capacity based on clear text modifiers with ISC subjects. Only one third acknowledged having been aware of the selective features added in October 1960. The covering letter and questionnaire have served to alert other analysts to the existence of these features.
2. To determine user interest in the continuance of the more specific subject control gained by the indexing of precise subjects, organization names, and place names. Of those who answered the question, 91% asked that these levels of indexing be continued.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The following are points of interest in systems development and appraisal:

1. Two essential characteristics of Intellofax System design were favored by a substantial majority: (1) the abstract, prepared in Document Division and printed on each index card; (2) the tape, (listing references) as the end-product rather than a set of hard-copy documents for all references retrieved.
2. The time factor in request service is not critical in a system designed to support research type projects. Response time was considered adequate by 82% of those who answered the question. In terms of a system designed for support to Current Intelligence type problems, the time factor would be altogether different, and would concern a different body of analysts.

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3. The answers of those who rarely, if ever, use Intellofax (not in past 12 months) accounted for 109, or 41% of the replies. Their answers are important in two respects.
  - a. In answer to question 2 (Does the level of indexing affect your decisions whether or not to use Intellofax) 133 said No. Yet 59 were not regular users. There are therefore, other overriding reasons for not using the service. This same distortion of the response to question 2 is very probably true for many of the remainder of the 133. Without a direct means of identifying other causes, no. 2 must be admitted to have little demonstrated value.
  - b. Some of the 109 non-users did indicate an interest in the revised system: 45 welcomed the added selectivity of the new Intellofax; 29 would like to secure documents as the first out-put of a search. (The Bell & Howell DARE may be an asset in this direction).
4. There are interesting implications in the number of failures to answer various questions. There were few blanks for unequivocal questions which related to matters of fact rather than opinion (Nos. 1 and 10). No response to these indicated only indifference. But in the two instances where analysts were asked a substantive question relating to subject control, there were 66 and 75 blanks from a total of 273 replies. While this was a small-scale effort, the inference is clear that customer participation in deciding upon system content is neither articulate nor particularly motivated in many instances. It would seem to be a proper conclusion that the selectivity of index content remains the problem of system designers, and that users prefer to leave that as a responsibility of reference components. In that event, the assumption that user participation is a major part of system development may well be in need of more substantial evidence.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

In taking note of the general nature of the response, the following items appear to justify appropriate action.

1. That emphasis on precise coding be continued, and that it be accompanied by an increased stress on selectivity by the retrieval service.

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RECOMMENDATIONS - Cont'd

2. That the Library continue to offer the service of complete document prints without waiting for an Intellofax Tape on those occasions when it is known in advance that full text is needed for all references recovered.
3. That a new brochure which explains the operation and capabilities of Intellofax be distributed among Agency analysts.



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Attachments: (2)  
As stated above.

TABLE I

Total Returns 273

	Yes	No	Perhaps	No Answer
1. Had you been aware of the new features for specific information control?	82	187		4
2. Does the level of indexing affect your decision whether or not to use Intellofax?	122	133	1	17
3. Given the added capacity to recover documents by name or organization, location, or object, are you likely to make more frequent use of Intellofax?	171	84	5	13
4. Do you recommend that these specific levels of subject control be continued?	188	19		66
5. Rank these in order of importance (1-4)				
	1	2	3	4
a. Organizations	40	78	59	55
b. Place names	36	31	87	73
c. Specific commodity	27	55	53	92
d. Precise subject	128	67	31	5
6. Would you recommend that application of specific subject control be extended to include every mention of those four categories?	114	83	1	75
7. Do you find the title expansion or abstract on the Intellofax card adequate to assist you in the selection of pertinent documents?	153	61	7	52
8. Would you use Intellofax service more often if you could request hard copy documents without the intermediate step of the Intellofax bibliographic tape?	67	168	4	34
9. Do you consider the present response time of Intellofax adequate for your needs?	179	40	2	52
If no, which stage is too slow?				
a. IBM card search	7			
b. Intellofax tape	11			
c. Document prints	22			
10. Have you used the Intellofax System in the past year? If your answer is no, explain.	156	109		8

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TABLE II

Analysis of Comments

Analysts who indicated that they had not used Intellofax in the past year were invited to comment. Remarks were recorded by 111 analysts, some of whom had placed requests during that period. Their comments are shown in three general groups. The proportion of criticism, adverse vs. favorable, is to be expected both from the wording of the question, and because many chose to comment on the basis of their particular requirements.

- |                                                                                              |                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Favorable comment-----                                                                    | 5              |
| 2. Do not need document research service or are pressed by deadlines for immediate response. |                |
| a. No need for document service-----                                                         | 37             |
| b. Rely on office files-----                                                                 | 22             |
| c. No time-----                                                                              | 20             |
|                                                                                              | Total       79 |
| 3. Critical of system weaknesses:                                                            |                |
| a. Unsatisfactory-----                                                                       | 6              |
| b. Insufficient coverage-----                                                                | 12             |
| c. Not useful-----                                                                           | 7              |
| d. Abstracts inadequate-----                                                                 | 2              |
|                                                                                              | Total       27 |

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